

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, NATO, CH, UR

SUBJECT: SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

REF: A. USNATO 0024, B. STATE 02642, C. USNATO 0044

1. DEPARTMENT HAS NO FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIONS TO USE OF
PAPER (REF A) AS BASIS FOR NAC DISCUSSIONS JANUARY 22.
WE AGREE THAT PAPER IS TOO LONG. OUR BASIC PROBLEM,
HOWEVER, IS THAT PAPER HAS DEVELOPED INTERNAL CONTRA-
DICTIONS. PARA 8 IS GOOD EXAMPLE: ON ONE HAND IT SAYS
RECENT EVENTS MAY HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT "IMPORTANT NUANCES"
IN SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE, BUT THEN GOES ON TO SAY POSITIONS
OF TWO SIDES REMAIN UNCHANGED. OUR OTHER GENERAL COMMENT
IS THAT PAPER SEEMS FREQUENTLY TO TAKE AT FACE VALUE
CHINESE ANALYSIS OF SOVIET POSITION ALTHOUGH THAT ANALYSIS
IS SOMETIMES ADVANCED FOR SELF-SERVING PURPOSE, AND EVEN
WHEN SINCERE HAS ITS INEVITABLE BIAS.

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2. PAPER ALSO SUFFERS FROM OVER-ANALYSIS. FOR INSTANCE, WE SEE NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IN FACT THAT SOVIET PRESS DROPPED THE WORD "GREAT" IN ITS PARAPHRASE OF THE CHINESE MESSAGE. ALSO, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT SOVIETS PUSHING ASIAN SECURITY PROPOSALS IN EFFORT TO UNDERCUT THEIR AGREEMENT TO DISCUSS BORDER QUESTIONS WITH CHINESE (PARA 14).

3. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THE CHINESE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THEIR ATTACKS ON THE SOVIETS ARE HINDERING THEIR OBJECTIVES IN THE THIRD WORLD OR THAT THE NOV. 7 MESSAGE SHOULD BE VIEWED AS MORE THAN ANOTHER EFFORT TO MAKE THE SOVIETS APPEAR UNREASONABLE ON THE BORDER ISSUE. THERE HAS BEEN NO LET-UP IN CHINESE ATTACKS ON THE SOVIETS. RECENT ARTICLE BY SHIH YU-HSIN IN RECENT ISSUE OF CHINESE JOURNAL "HISTORICAL RESEARCH" IS GOOD EXAMPLE, PARTICULARLY SINCE IT RESTATES CONDITION THAT SOVIETS ADMIT BORDER TREATIES ARE UNEQUAL.

4. PARA 23. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT PRC BELIEVES BREZHNEV IS CHINA'S MAJOR ENEMY BUT THIS DOES NOT LEND TO CONCLUSION THAT THE USSR'S LEADER IS INDEED IN THAT POSITION. FURTHERMORE, WE HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH THE IMPLICATION IN THIS PARA THAT BREZHNEV IN HIS ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CHINESE IS SOMEHOW AT ODDS WITH OTHER IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP.

5. PARA 24 SETS FORTH CHINESE INTERPRETATION OF BREZHNEV'S SPEECH BUT FAILS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THIS IS ONLY ONE VIEW OF THE SPEECH AND SURELY DOES NOT REPRESENT USSR VIEW OF DISPUTED AREAS QUESTION. SOVIETS OBVIOUSLY RECOGNIZE LONG-STANDING CHINESE POSITION THAT THEY ARE NOT DISPUTING ALL THE TERRITORIES UNDER "UNEQUAL TREATIES" AND BREZHNEV DID NOT SO ACCUSE THE CHINESE. SOVIETS IN PRIVATE HAVE MADE CLEAR THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MAKE SOME ADJUSTMENTS TO EXISTING BORDER, BUT THEY ARE NOT GOING TO ACCEPT WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR FORCES FROM ANY AREA AS A PRECONDITION FOR SUBSTANTIVE TALKS AND THEY SURELY ARE NOT GOING TO ACCEPT CHINESE DEFINITION OF "DISPUTED AREAS." IN A LARGER SENSE SOVIETS ARE PROBABLY RELUCTANT

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TO TAKE MORE FORTHCOMING POSITION ON BORDER QUESTION, FOR AS THE PAPER POINTS OUT, THIS IS ONLY PART OF LARGER PROBLEM. THEY HAVE NO ASSURANCES THAT A SETTLEMENT OF THE BORDER DISPUTE WOULD IN FACT LEAD TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN THE BASIC RELATIONSHIP.

6. YOU MAY AGREE TO PLACE IS PAPER ON NAC AGENDA FOR JANUARY 22 AND DRAW ON ABOVE COMMENTS AS APPROPRIATE IN

NAC DISCUSSION. KISSINGER

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